

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01  
/087 W

-----097737 191037Z /14

R 190700Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6926  
INFO AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
CINCPAC  
COMIDEASTFOR  
CINCUSNAVEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L POURT LOUIS 0872

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: ECON ELAB PINT MP  
SUBJECT: MAURITIUS WEEKLY REVIEW - AUGUST 19 (SUMMARY)

REF: PORT LOUIS 852 (DTG 121030Z AUG 77)

1. IN A SURPRISE MOVE, PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM CONVOKED THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY INTO A SPECIAL SESSION ON AUGUST 16 TO DEAL WITH THE IMPASSE IN THE TRIPARTITE WAGE INCREASE NEGOTIATIONS (REFTEL). THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME SINCE INDEPENDENCE THAT THERE HAS BEEN SUCH AN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION DURING AN ASSEMBLY RECESS. THE MARXIST-ORIENTED MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM), WHICH HAD SUGGESTED THE SPECIAL SESSION, PROCLAIMED A VICTORY OVER THE GOVERNMENT. THE NATIONAL TRADE UNION FRONT PROMPTLY CALLED OFF ITS CONTEMPLATED GENERAL STRIKE IN VIEW OF THE P.M.'S  
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ACTION.

2. THE ASSEMBLY, AFTER A SOMEWHAT BITTER DEBATE, ADOPTED THE P.M.'S MOTION TO APPOINT A SELECT COMMITTEE OF NINE MEMBERS TO STUDY THE PROBLEM AND REPORT BACK IN TWO WEEKS' TIME. RAMGOOLAM SHOWED A CONCILIATORY SPIRIT TOWARD THE MMM, AND OPPOSITION LEADER JUGNAUTH RESPONDED IN KIND,

SAYING HIS PARTY DOES NOT WISH TO IMPERIL THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY, FOR AS THE ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENT THEY DO NOT WISH "TO INHERIT RUINS." RAMGOOLAM REFERRED TO A MINORITY WHICH WANTS TO PROVOKE A CONFRONTATION IN ORDER "TO BRING THE GOVERNMENT TO ITS KNEES." OTHER MMM SPEAKERS IN THE DEBATE, LED BY SECRETARY GENERAL BERENGER, ASSAILED THE GOVERNMENT FOR HAVING FAILED TO KEEP ITS ELECTORAL PROMISES, AND FOR CLAIMING THE COUNTRY IS ENJOYING "UNPRECEDENTED PROSPERITY" WHILE INSISTING THAT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION PRECLUDES A REASONABLE WAGE INCREASE FOR THE WORKERS.

3. (COMMENT: RAMGOOLAM TOLD THE AMBASSADOR HE HAD BEEN FORCED TO CALL THE ASSEMBLY INTO SESSION, AS THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN A STRIKE WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN "VERY DESTRUCTIVE" FOR THE COUNTRY. HIS TACTIC WAS DESIGNED TO DE-FUSE A DEVELOPING CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE TRADE UNIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT, BUT HE MAY BE PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF THE MMM, WHICH WILL VOCIFEROUSLY TAKE THE SIDE OF THE WORKERS IN THE SELECT COMMITTEE'S DELIBERATIONS. IF THE COMMITTEE REACHES AN IMPASSE, AS SEEMS LIKELY, THE MMM WILL EMERGE AS THE SOLE NATIONAL CHAMPIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS. FINANCE MINISTER RINGADOO, WHO WAS MADE CHAIRMAN OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE AND WHO DIRECTED THE TRIPARTITE NEGOTIATIONS, SEEMS UNHAPPY THAT RAMGOOLAM HAS SOUGHT A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO WHAT WAS ESSENTIALLY AN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DISPUTE. END COMMENT.)  
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4. THE GOM HAS BANNED THE IMPORTATION OF SECOND-HAND MOTOR VEHICLES, APPARENTLY TO CONSERVE SCARCE FOREIGN EXCHANGE. AS PORT CONGESTION AT PORT LOUIS HAS BEEN RELIEVED, THE FREIGHT SURCHARGE HAS BEEN LOWERED.

5. LONG-TIME INDEPENDENT POLITICIAN SOOKDEO BISSOONDOYAL, HIGHLY RESPECTED LEADER OF THE INDEPENDENT FORWARD BLOC PARTY, DIED AUGUST 18. HIS PARTY, WHICH FAILED TO WIN A SINGLE SEAT LAST DECEMBER, WILL DIE WITH HIM.  
KEELEY

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Executive Order:** GS  
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**TAGS:** ECON, ELAB, PINT, MP, MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT, (RAMGOOLAM, SEEWOOSAGUR)  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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